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Remarks Submitted to the Education Committee
On S.B. No. 24-AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS
Section 28 and 29
Initial Certificate Requirements and Teacher Tenure

February 21, 2012

Senator Stillman and Representative Fleischman, and members of the Education Committee, my name is Dana Liberatore, and I'm a 3rd grade teacher in Stamford, Connecticut. I am writing today to comment on Senate Bill 24, Section 28 and Section 29.

First and foremost, as a second year teacher reading the governor's proposed plan and hearing his comments about teachers, I am truly disheartened by his obvious disregard of this challenging profession. The governor's proposed education bill makes the Master's Degree optional, which allows for less experienced individuals to teach our children. Prior to receiving my Master's degree, legislation made it practically mandatory for candidates to receive their Master's degrees—and this was not even a full three years ago. Why was it mandatory? The answer is simple: teachers must be held to high standards for teaching our society's future leaders. How can the governor possibly seek to lower expectations of teacher candidates when everyone else holds us to such high expectations?

In a recent speech, the governor stated, "All they [teachers] have to do is show up for 4 years and they have a job for life". After reading the proposed plan and hearing this heinous remark, it is apparent that he truly does not understand the tenure process. I am a beginning teacher, in my second year. If all I have to do is show up each and every day, would I have a connection with each and every one of my students? Would I communicate on a regular basis with my students' parents to discuss ways to help their children? Would I work almost 13 hour days preparing myself for the next day? Would I leave feedback on student assignments to help them with the next ones? Would I differentiate my instruction in reading, writing, and math to ensure I am targeting individual student needs? Would I spend my money to ensure my students have the necessary materials and resources because our district will not supply it? Would I constantly worry about the little boy that tells me he doesn't eat dinner and he saw a bugs crawling on his bed? The answer is again simple—no.

Aside from what I do on a daily basis, besides show up, I am observed three times a year for four years. I meet for a pre-observation with my administrators in order to discuss what I will be teaching, how I will assess students, and how I will differentiate. Once the

lesson is complete, a post-observation is conducted to discuss recommendations for the next lesson. Aside from observations, walk-throughs are conducted to make sure I am doing what I should be doing. I am also currently going through the TEAM process, and if I do not pass, my certification will not be renewed. I show up each and every day and give my all. The governor's proposed plan makes my salary and my contract based on the judgment of one administrator.

Members of the Education Committee, I strongly urge you to reconsider proposed Senate Bill 24 that only lowers standards for a profession that is already questioned and disregarded on a daily basis from everyone *except* the ones who "show up" every day.